

Proposal 91, SW Unit 20D, Grouse

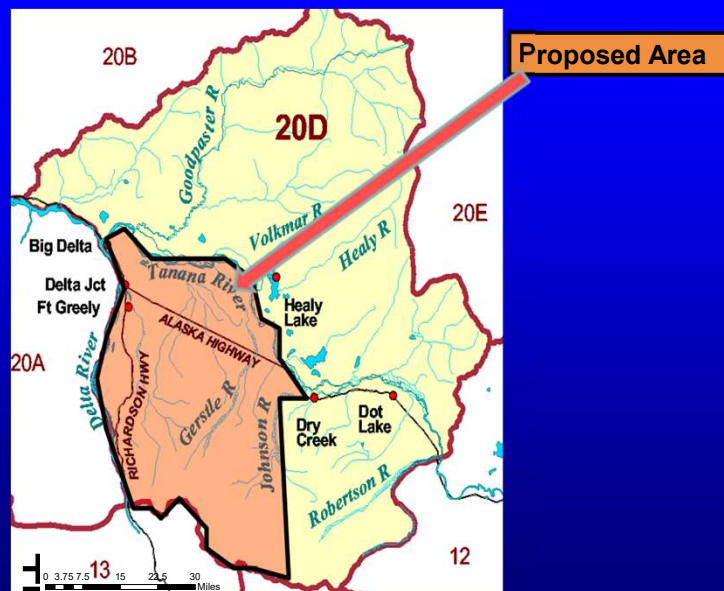
- **Proposal:** Reduce the bag and possession limit for grouse (ruffed and spruce) to 5 per day, 15 in possession, provided that no more than 10 in possession may be ruffed or sharp-tailed grouse in Unit 20D west of the Johnson River and south of the Tanana River
- **Submitted By:** Delta Jct. Fish & Game Advisory Committee
- **ADF&G Recommendation:**
NEUTRAL
- **Delta AC Recommendation:**
SUPPORT with amendments
(Non-Falconry only), 10-0-1



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Proposal 91, SW Unit 20D, Grouse



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Proposal 91, SW Unit 20D, Grouse

- **Issue:**
 - **Local concerns:**
 - Increased participation of small game hunting
 - Well-developed road and trail access
 - **Grouse can be easily harvested along roads and trails**
 - Sharp-tailed limits are currently 5 per day
 - **Proposal seeks to align all grouse species limits**
 - Reduction of 10 ruffed and spruce grouse per day
 - Falconry daily bag reduction of 50% (10 to 5)

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Proposal 91, SW Unit 20D, Grouse

- **Department Considerations:**
 - **ADF&G has no biological concerns**
 - **No biological data to suggest current harvest rates are unsustainable**

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Proposal 91, SW Unit 20D, Grouse

Grouse seasons and bag limits

	Current Regulations		Proposed Regulations	
	<i>Daily Bag Limit</i>	<i>Possession Limit</i>	<i>Daily Bag Limit</i>	<i>Possession Limit</i>
Non-Falconry Hunters August 25-March 31	15, of which not more than 5 may be sharp-tails	30, of which not more than 10 may be sharp-tails	<u>5</u> grouse	<u>15</u> , of which not more than <u>10</u> may be either <u>ruffed</u> or sharp-tails
Falconry Hunters August 10-August 24	10, of which not more than 2 may be sharp-tails	10, of which not more than 2 may be sharp-tails	<u>5</u> , of which not more than <u>2</u> may be either <u>ruffed</u> or sharp-tails	<u>10</u> , of which not more than <u>2</u> may be either <u>ruffed</u> or sharp-tails

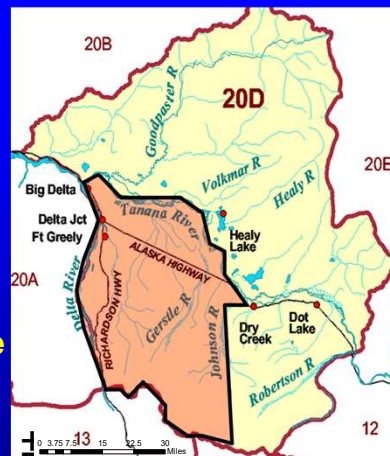
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Proposal 91, SW Unit 20D, Grouse

Background:

- The area has an extensive road/trail system and land clearing
- BOG reduced sharp-tailed grouse bag limit from 15 to 5 in 1990
- BOG failed a proposal in 2017 to reduce the bag and possession limit for ruffed grouse to 5 a day, 10 in possession



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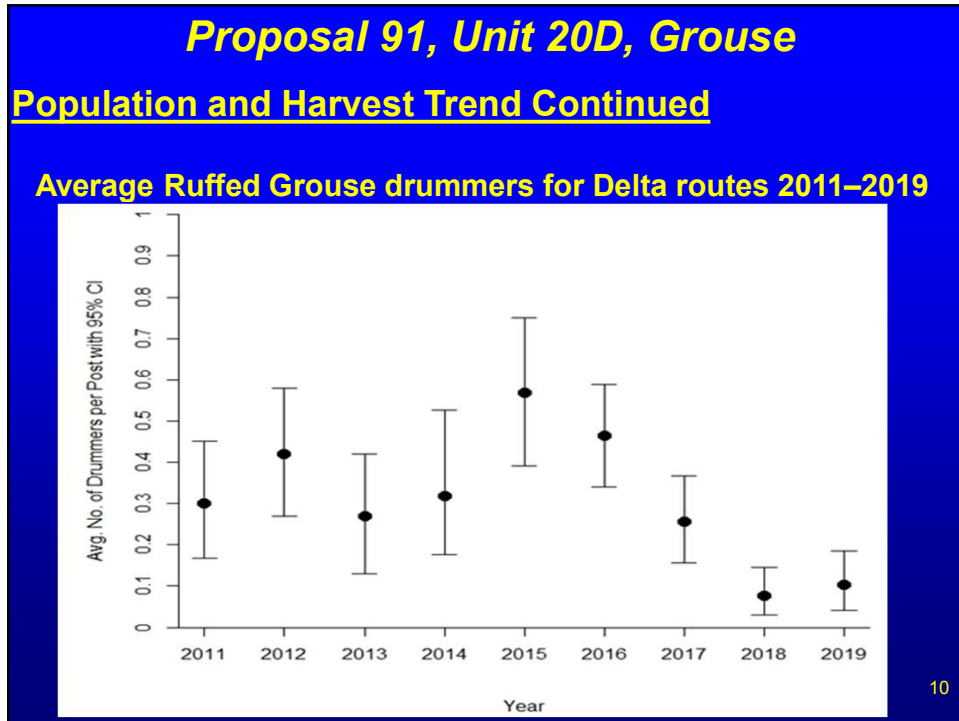
Proposal 91, SW Unit 20D, Grouse

Population and Harvest Trend:

- Few data on harvest rates on grouse in southwestern Unit 20D
 - ADF&G does have limited voluntary wing collection data
- ADF&G data from Denali Hwy. shows localized depletion of ptarmigan populations near popular access points
 - The same harvest and population patterns likely apply to other small game populations including SW Unit 20D grouse
- Ruffed grouse are currently near the low point of 8-10 year population cycle
- Grouse habitat work on-going in Unit 20D

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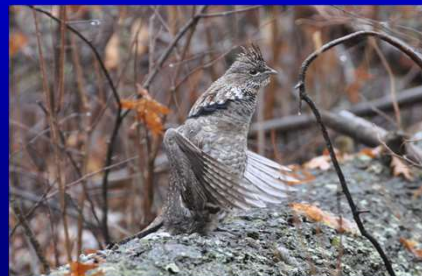
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- Proposal 91, SW Unit 20D, Grouse**
Effects of Proposal/Conclusions:
- **Local residents' concerns**
 - Increased small game hunting
 - Well-developed access
 - **Changes long-standing bag limit**
 - Limit reduced from 15 to 5 for ruffed and spruce grouse per day
 - Overall grouse possession limit reduced from 30 to 15; ruffed grouse from 30 to 10
 - Combined falconry daily grouse bag reduced from 10 to 5; ruffed grouse reduced from 10 to 2
 - Falconry ruffed grouse possession limit also reduced from 10 to 2
 - **Bag limit would be aligned for all grouse in SW Unit 20D**
 - **No biological concern**
 - **Limited biological data on grouse populations and harvest**
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Proposal 92, Unit 20D, Methods and Means

- **Proposal:** Allow methods and means disability exemptions within the Delta Controlled Use Area for hunting Macomb Caribou (RC835) for hunters who are permanently wheelchair bound or similarly disabled
- **Submitted By:** Delta Jct. Fish & Game Advisory Committee
- **ADF&G Recommendation:**
NEUTRAL
- **Delta AC Recommendation:**
SUPPORT, 11-0



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Proposal 92, Unit 20D, Methods and Means

Current Regulations:

- 5 AAC 92.104. Authorization for methods and means disability exemptions
 - ADF&G currently does not issue methods and means disability exemption permits for RC835 in the DCUA citing motorized hunting opportunity exists without having this permit
 - Level of disability currently not defined for methods and means disability exemptions

Proposed Regulations:

- 5 AAC 92.104. Authorization for methods and means disability exemptions
 - Allow methods and means exemptions for RC835 in the DCUA for hunters who are permanently wheelchair bound or similarly disabled

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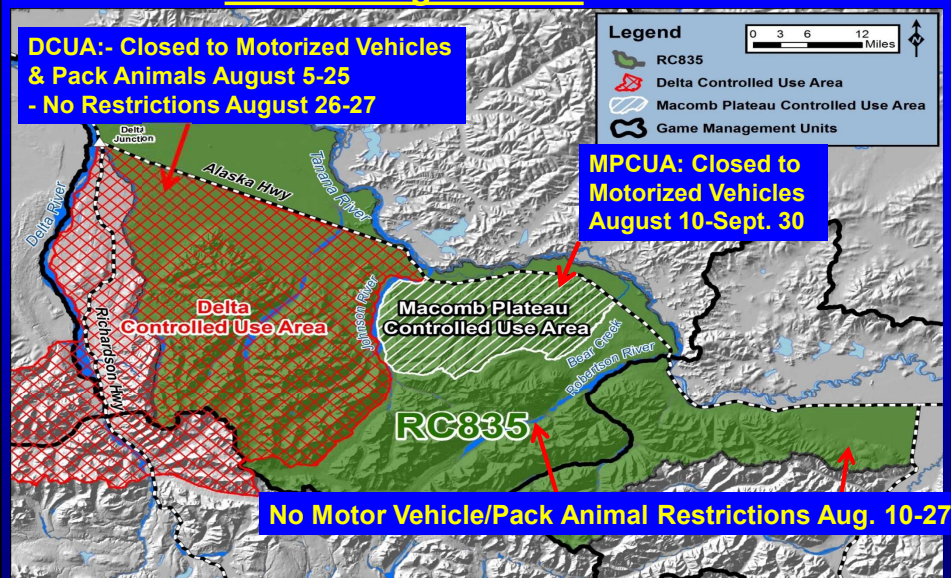
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Proposal 92, Unit 20D, Methods and Means

Current Regulations:

**DCUA:- Closed to Motorized Vehicles
& Pack Animals August 5-25
- No Restrictions August 26-27**

**MPCUA: Closed to
Motorized Vehicles
August 10-Sept. 30**



No Motor Vehicle/Pack Animal Restrictions Aug. 10-27

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Proposal 92, Unit 20D, Methods and Means

- **Conclusion:**
 - Department is neutral on this proposal
 - Allocation issue and no biological concern
 - This proposal only applies to caribou
 - Methods and means exemption requests are low for the DCUA (average of 1-2 requests per year since 2002)
 - Could be addressed at 2021 statewide meeting
- ***Note: The Americans with Disabilities Act requires the State of Alaska to make reasonable modifications when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the modification would fundamentally alter the nature of the program or activity.***

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SUPPORT, 11-0



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Proposal 93, Unit 20D, Brown Bear

- **Proposal:**

- Allow brown bear harvest at bait in Unit 20D South, between the Gerstle and Robertson Rivers during the current baiting season
- Allow same-day-airborne harvest of brown bears at bait stations if at least 300 feet from airplane

- **Submitted by:** Public

- **ADF&G Recommendation:**
OPPOSED

- **Delta AC Recommendation:**
SUPPORT, 8–3



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Proposal 93, Unit 20D, Brown Bear

Issues:

- Brown bear harvest in Unit 20D is high
 - Female harvest at upper limit of management objective
- Limited Unit 20D population data
- Unit 20D harvest objective is 5-15 bears
 - Approaching upper limit nearly every year
- Concern that expanded opportunity would lead to unsustainable harvest

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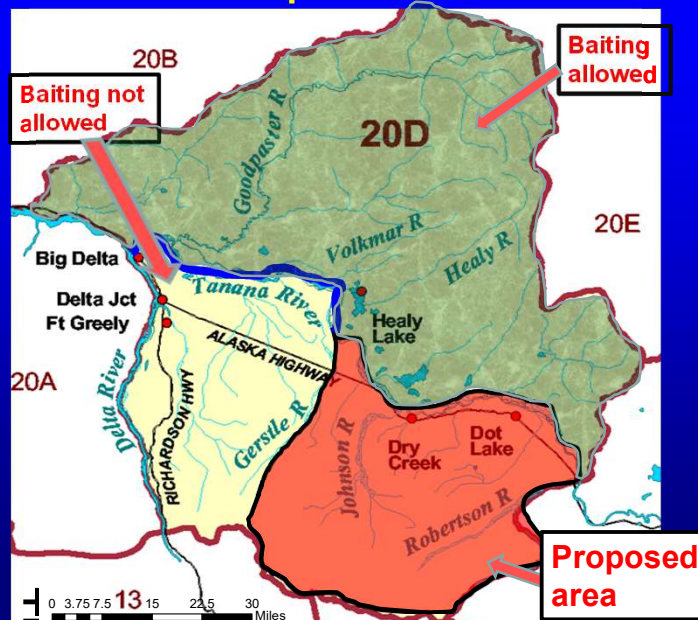
Proposal 93, Unit 20D, Brown Bear ***Issues Continued:***

- Bait stations concentrated in highly accessible areas
- Possible strategies to ensure bears are not over-harvested
 - Shorter brown bear hunting season
 - Reduction in baiting season
 - Hunting/baiting via registration permit, with quota
- Requested area further subdivides Unit 20D
 - <1,000 mi² where baiting is not allowed
 - Misaligns with other species' subdivision
 - Johnson River

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Proposal 93, Unit 20D, Brown Bear ***Proposed Area***



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Proposal 93, Unit 20D, Brown Bear

[Background](#)

Current Regulations:

- Resident and nonresident hunters: One brown bear per year, August 10–June 30
- Harvesting a brown bear over bait and same-day-airborne allowed in Unit 20D North only
- Bear baiting season in Unit 20D is April 15–June 30

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Proposal 93, Unit 20D, Brown Bear

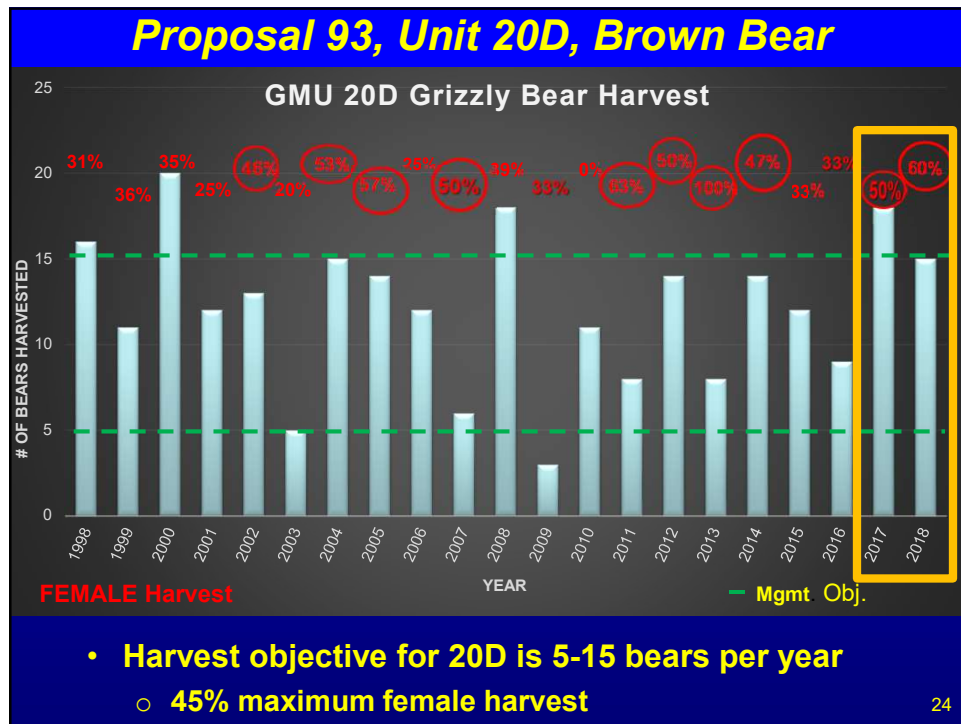
[Background](#)

Unit 20D Population Estimate:

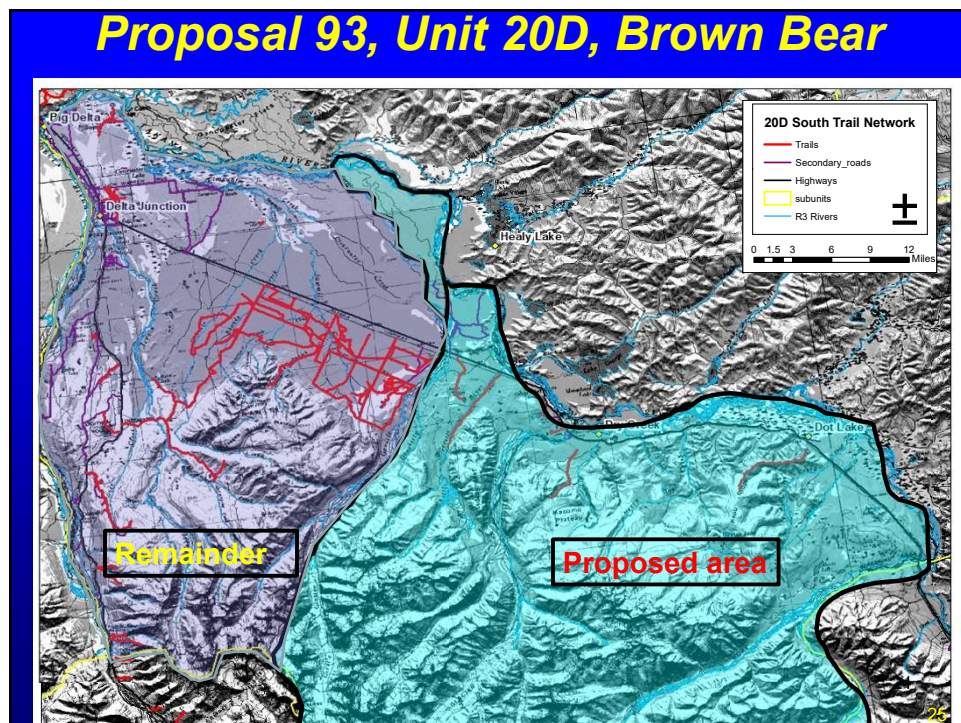
- 185–220 total bears
 - 76–86 Unit 20D South
 - 109–134 Unit 20D North

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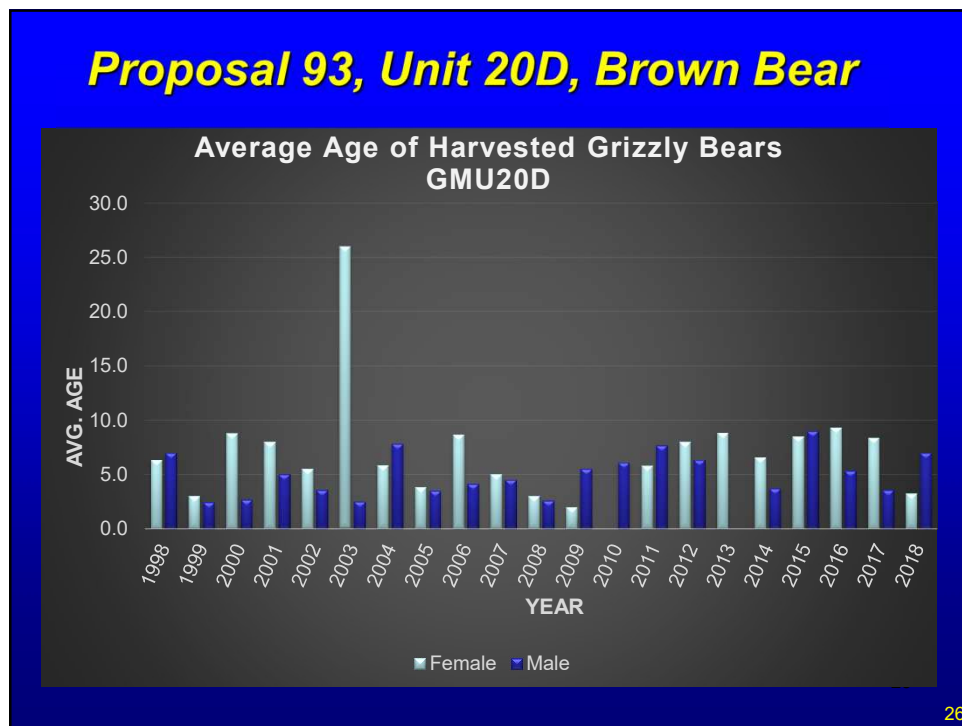
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Proposal 93, Unit 20D, Brown Bear

Background

- Unit 20D baiting season is 1 month longer than Units 20A & 20B; overall hunting season is nearly 2 months longer
- Brown bear harvest increased when baiting was allowed
- Bait station registration increased when brown bear baiting was allowed
- Unit 20D south bait station locations could shift to target brown bears if baiting is legalized
- Many locals travel to adjacent units to bear bait where brown bear baiting is legal
 - May shift to Unit 20D South if brown bear baiting is legalized

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Proposal 93, Unit 20D, Brown Bear

Background

- Any additional harvest would exceed management obj.
- ANS of 1–2 bears outside of the Fairbanks Non-Sub. Area
- 50% of Unit 20D bait stations are south of the Tanana Rv and 55% of these are in the proposed area
- Most baiting occurs along developed roads and trails or along river corridors
- Unit 20D South is well-developed
- 5 proposals in 2017 to allow brown bear baiting in Unit 20D
 - 1 proposal amended to allow baiting in 20D North only

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Proposal 93, Unit 20D, Brown Bear

Conclusions:


- At upper limit of mgmt. obj. for overall & female harvest
- Limited brown bear population data
 - Recommend conservative harvest strategy due to the uncertainties of this population
 - More information needed on population dynamics before liberalizing harvest methods
- On-going investigations to guide brown bear management
- Further complication of regulations by subdividing unit
- High public interest in brown bear baiting
 - Registration permit baiting would be a conservative mgmt. approach

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- **Submitted by:** Public
- **ADF&G Recommendation:**
OPPOSED
- **Delta AC Recommendation:**
SUPPORT, 8–3



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Proposal 94, Unit 20D, Moose

- **Proposal:** Reauthorize the antlerless moose hunting season in Unit 20D
- **Submitted by:** ADF&G
- **ADF&G Recommendation:**
SUPPORT
- **Delta AC Recommendation:**
SUPPORT, 7-4
- **Fairbanks AC Recommendation:**



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Proposal 94, Unit 20D, Moose

- **Issue:** The Unit 20D antlerless moose hunts must be reauthorized annually
- **Department Considerations:**
 - Allow continuation Southwestern Unit 20D antlerless drawing hunts (~30 permits are awarded annually)
 - Permit numbers may be changed based on most recent population estimates and nutritional status
 - Registration hunts retained in codified

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Proposal 94, Unit 20D, Moose

Background:

- **BOG adopted Intensive Management for Unit 20D moose in 1995**
 - Population objective = 8,000–10,000
 - Harvest objective = 500–700
- **By 2006, population in SW Unit 20D increased to 5.6 moose/mi²**
 - Moderately low twinning rate
 - Moderately high browse utilization

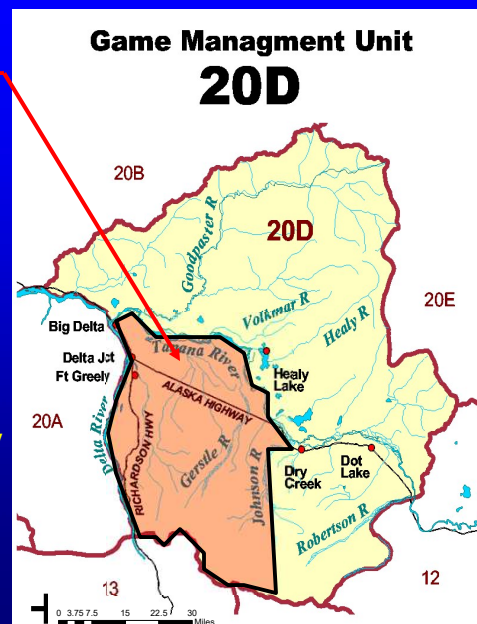
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Proposal 94, Unit 20D, Moose

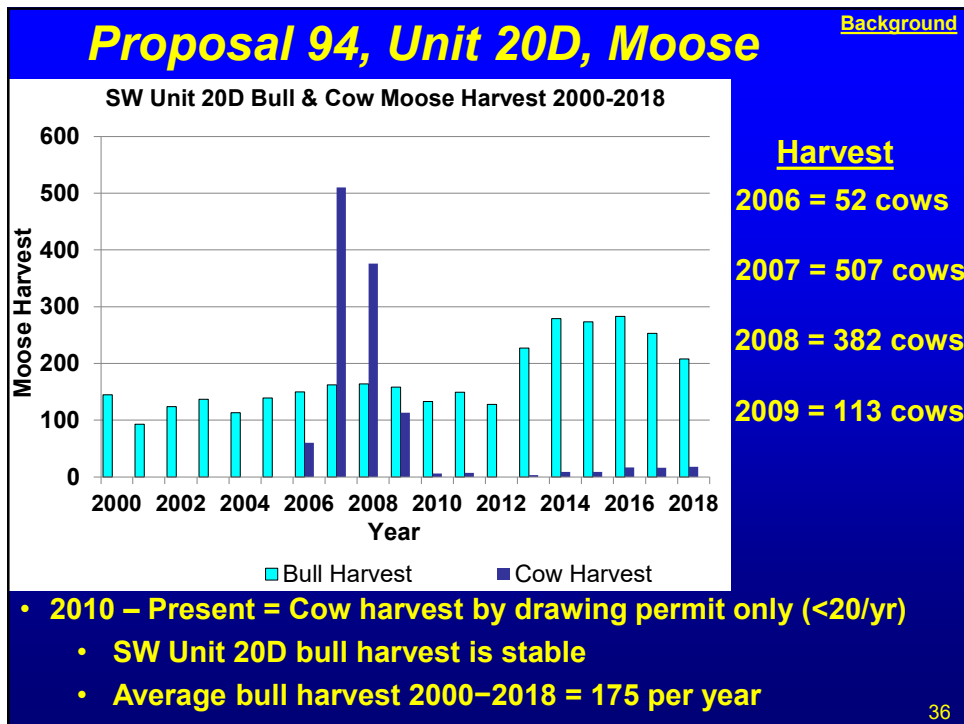
Background cont'd:

- **Southwest Unit 20D**
 - South of Tanana River
 - West of Johnson River
- **Highest moose density & population growth**
- **Extensive agricultural land clearing & wildfires last 30 years**
- **Abundance of high quality moose habitat**
- **High bear & wolf harvest**

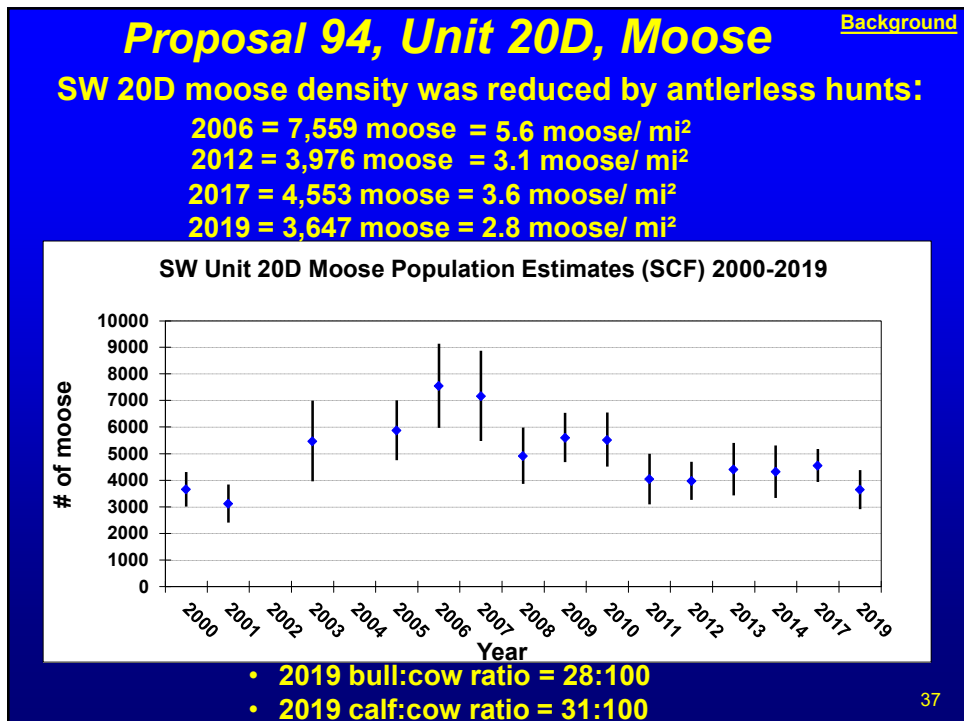


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Proposal 94, Unit 20D, Moose

Background Cont'd

- Data collection to determine when antlerless hunts should be used:
 - Movement & population identity
 - Aerial survey sightability
 - Twinning rates (2-year avg.)
 - Over 20%, promote pop. growth
 - 11 –20%, stable pop. growth
 - $\leq 10\%$, reduce pop. growth
 - Weights of 9 month old calves
 - Overwinter browse utilization

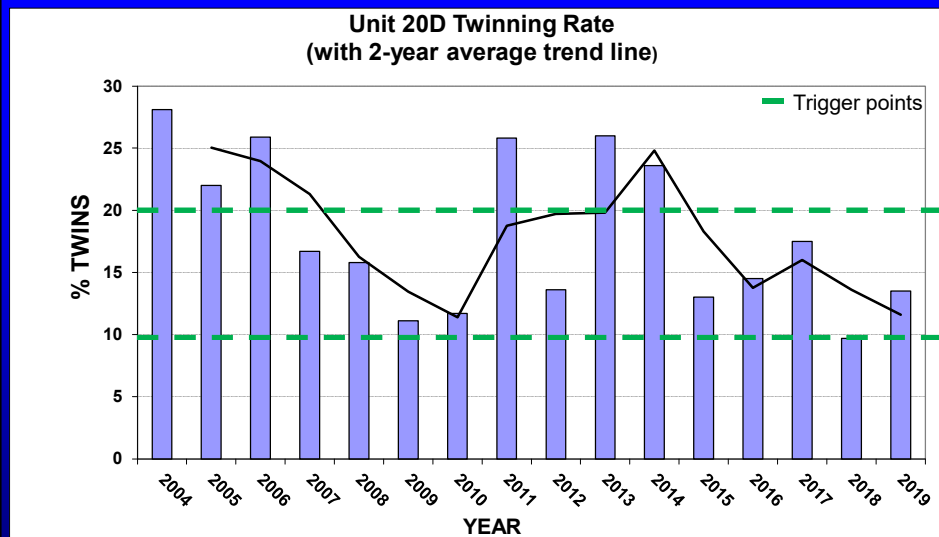


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Proposal 94, Unit 20D, Moose

Background



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Proposal 94, Unit 20D, Moose **Summary:**

- SW Unit 20D had high density moose pop. = 5.6 moose/mi²
 - 1,054 cow moose harvested from 2006–2009
- Moose density reduced to 3.1 moose/mi²
 - Since 2009 <20 cow moose harvested per year
- Permits will only be issued via drawing in special hunts until data collection suggests there is a need for further reduction
- Requesting reauthorization as a management tool

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- **Submitted by:** ADF&G
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SUPPORT
- **Delta AC Recommendation:**
SUPPORT, 7–4
- **Fairbanks AC Recommendation:**



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